

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PANAMA 01592 092250Z
ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00
PA-02 USIA-15 SP-02 SAB-02 PM-05 /051 W
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R 091635Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6020
INFO PANCANAL
USCINCSO

UNCLAS PANAMA 1592

DEPT FOR ARA/PAF AND PAN

USCINCSO FOR J-2 AND PAO

PANCANAL FOR IO

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SOPN, PN
SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTIONS

THE FOLLOWING SENT FROM USIS/PANAMA DATED 09 MAR ACTION
USINFO WASHDC INFO SECSTATE REPEATED FOR YOUR INFO/ACTION

QUOTE

MEDIA REACTION

1. PANAMA CITY -- ALL PAPERS FRONT-PAGED (MARCH 9) THE MARCH 8
SPEECH BY GENERAL TORRIJOS TO AN INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY
RALLY IN DOWNTOWN PANAMA CITY. EACH MORNING DAILY HIGHLIGHTED
DIFFERENT THEMES FROM THE TEN MINUTE OFF-THE-CUFF REMARKS.
GOVERNMENT CONTROLLED CRITICA HEADLINED: "PANAMAINANS WANT
ELECTION WITHOUT POLITICAL MIDDLEMEN," GOVERNMENT-CONTROLLED
MATUTINO: "OMAR TORRIJOS SAYS: INFAMY PENETRATES INTO THE
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CONSCIOUSNESS OF THOSE WHO HUMBLE THEMSELVES BEFORE IMPERIALISM,"
SEMI-INDEPENDENT LA ESTRELLA: "DISMISS DIRECT PARTICIPATION
OF PARTIES," AND SISTER STAR & HERALD: "TORRIJOS STILL
CONFIDENT TREATIES WILL BE RATIFIED."

2. ALL OF THE ABOVE REPRESENT TOPICS TOUCHED ON IN THE BRIEF
APPEARANCE (AS HEARD ON RADIO) TORRIJOS BEGAN BY SALUTING THE

WOMEN ON THEIR DAY AND THEN TURNED TO THE DEBATES, REFERRING TO THE SENATE AS THE "GREAT JURY OF CONSCIENCE WHERE 100 MEN, MANY OF THEM WORTHY, OTHER CONFUSED, ARE DETERMINING THE FUTURE OF A NATION."

3. TORRIJOS BRUSHED OFF ATTEMPTS BY TREATY OPPONENTS TO DISCREDIT HIM, SAYING THAT THEY HAD "NOT THE SLIGHTEST IMPORTANCE BECAUSE IT WAS NOT THE FIRST NOR WOULD IT BE THE LAST" SUCH EFFORT. HE REFERRED TO THE "RESPONSIBLE OPINION OF MANY SENATORS," AND SPECIFICALLY TO SENATOR MURIEL HUMPHREY WHOM HE QUOTED AS SAYING "THE TIME WILL COME WHEN WE CAN ALL LIVE TOGETHER AS ONE PEOPLE." TORRIJOS ALSO WARNED THE ASSEMBLED WOMEN NOT TO FALL FOR PROVACATIONS INTENDED TO "MAKE US LOSE OUR CALM," HE WARNED THEM THAT THEY WOULD CONTINUE TO HEAR HUMILIATING AND OFFENSIVE LANGUAGE AS THEY FOLLOW THE DEBATES.

4. AFTER A BRIEF BREAK AND SEEMINGLY AS AN AFTERTHOUGHT, TORRIJOS TURNED TO THE ISSUE OF POLITICAL PARTICIPATION ASKING THE WOMEN IF THEY WANTED TO CONTINUE THE ESTABLISHED SYSTEM OF PARTICIPATION WITHOUT "MIDDLEMEN" (INTERMEDIARIOS). THE MICROPHONE DID NOT PICK UP A SIGNIFICANT RESPONSE FOR OR AGAINST HIS QUESTION. HE THEN TOLD THEM THAT HE THOUGHT THEY WERE MATURE CITIZENS WHO DIDN'T NEED MIDDLEMEN AND URGED THEM TO GET OUT THE VOTE AUGUST 6 AND SUPPORT THE CURRENT SYSTEM. TORRIJOS ENDED WITH THE FOLLOWING ON THE TREATIES: "I HAVE UNCLASSIFIED

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FAITH THAT THOSE WHO BELIEVE IN THE DIGNITY OF THE PEOPLES WILL OVERCOME THOSE WHO BELIEVE IN THEIR SUBJECTION." ITEM

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To: STATE
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